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Fifty-fifth year

Provisional

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Friday, 29 September 2000, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Ouane	(Mali)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Listre
	Bangladesh	Mr. Chowdhury
	Canada	Mr. Heinbecker
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Jamaica	Miss Durrant
	Malaysia	Mr. Hasmy
	Namibia	Mr. Gurirab
	Netherlands	Mr. Hamer
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Tunisia	Mr. Ben Mustapha
	Ukraine	Mr. Yel'chenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Holbrooke

Agenda

The situation in Burundi

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00-66438 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

The President *(spoke in French)*: I note the presence at the Council table of His Excellency Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Namibia.

Tribute to the memory of Mr. Pierre Elliott Trudeau, former Prime Minister of Canada

The President *(spoke in French)*: On behalf of the Council I should like to convey my heartfelt condolences to the Government and people of Canada, and to the bereaved family, on the death of Mr. Pierre Elliott Trudeau, former Prime Minister of Canada. His deep dedication to the cause of international peace and his firm support for the United Nations and its activities are appreciated by the entire international community.

I invite members of the Council to stand and observe a minute of silence.

The members of the Council observed a minute of silence.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Burundi

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Burundi in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In accordance with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Nteturuye (Burundi) took the Council table.

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to His Excellency Mr. Nelson Mandela, Facilitator of the Arusha process.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Mandela to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

I give the floor to the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General: I would like to thank the Security Council for holding this meeting, which is very timely. Most of all I want to express my deep appreciation to President Mandela for travelling all the way to New York to brief the Council on the current phase of his peace efforts in Burundi. Thanks to President Mandela's work, the peace process has moved forward significantly. The signing of the Arusha agreement on 28 August, followed by the agreement on 20 September in Nairobi on the participation of the remaining three parties, is surely a very important milestone in Burundi's long and painful road to peace.

Let me reiterate our gratitude to President Mandela for the invaluable contribution he has made. As you know, the Arusha agreement is a comprehensive blueprint for the reform of Burundian society. It addresses the root causes of the conflict, such as exclusion and genocide, as well as the tragic consequences of the war, including the plight of hundreds of thousands of refugees and internally displaced people.

However, before this ambitious programme can be fully implemented, a number of obstacles must still be overcome, to which the Facilitator is now dedicating his time and effort.

The United Nations is ready and willing to make its contribution to the success of these efforts — for the sake of the people of Burundi, but also for the stability and prosperity of a troubled region, which could find a source of inspiration in a successful peace process in Burundi for the negotiated settlement of its wider conflicts.

I am grateful that Madiba is here with us today. Let us listen to his assessment, and let us give him our unstinting support.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the Facilitator of the Arusha process, His Excellency Mr. Nelson Mandela.

Mr. Mandela: We are honoured by the opportunity of returning to the Security Council to report to you and to our world body on progress and the current state of affairs in the Burundi peace process.

Our role as Facilitator of the process to which the leaders of that region saw fit to appoint us was in a sense inaugurated with a visit to the Security Council in January of this year. On 16 January we paid our first acquaintance-making visit to Arusha, the seat of the peace negotiations, from where we proceeded directly here to brief the Council and to seek its support for the continuation of the process started by the late Mwalimu Julius Nyerere.

The support we received from the Security Council by way of a resolution and the general expressions of encouragement from members inspired us. It allowed us to take on the daunting challenge of following in the footsteps of the great Mwalimu Nyerere, the highly gifted and revered international statesman, and to continue the sterling work he had done up to that point. We could do so in the confident knowledge that our world body, and through it the international community, took a serious and direct interest in the quest for peace in Burundi. That sense of the international community making the plight of a small and poor country its concern inspired us to involve a range of heads of State and Government in the Burundi peace process.

We said here at our first visit to the Security Council that the continuation of preventable suffering of people anywhere in the world demeaned all of us. The manner in which the international community responded to calls for involvement in the Burundi process was a powerful demonstration that the shared responsibility for the fate of humankind was increasingly being accepted by the modern-day leadership.

It will remain for us one of the most promising features of the Burundi peace process that so many heads of State or Government, or their delegated representatives, gave of their time and energy to attend and participate in the plenary sessions at Arusha. The significance of this, we believe, will resonate even beyond the Burundi issue. It must have sent a powerful message that the leaders in the immediate region, on the continent and on the broader international front care about peace in the world, no matter where it may be under attack. This demonstration of commitment to Burundi must be a clear indication that the neglect of Africa, particularly, is being turned around.

The international interest and participation were crucial for moving the peace process forward. They convinced the Burundian leadership that peace in Burundi was not merely a domestic matter over which they had the liberty to take as much time as suited them. The physical presence of so many other leaders persuaded them of the urgency to find peace. It forcefully demonstrated to them that the quest for peace in Burundi was part of the global search for a world in which conflicts and differences are resolved through negotiation and compromise, rather than through resort to violence.

We must commence our report on the progress in the Burundi peace process with a tribute to the political leadership of Burundi. We reported to this Council in January our faith that there were leaders of quality and commitment in Burundi, people dedicated to finding a lasting peace that would end the carnage and suffering visited for too long on the people of that beautiful country. We are proud to report today that our faith was not misplaced and that the leadership rose magnificently to the challenge. The leaders committed themselves to a particular methodology and procedure that we proposed for advancing the process, and at the end of the day were able to reach an agreement of significant proportions for the future of Burundi.

We proposed in confidential discussions with each of the parties represented at the Arusha talks, and subsequently at a plenary session in the presence of attending regional, continental and international leaders, that the facilitation team be mandated to draw up a comprehensive draft compromise proposal based on the inputs received over the lengthy period of negotiations. On receipt of comments on the draft compromise, a final plan would be drawn up and the parties would agree to accept it as the basis for implementing peace plans in Burundi. The parties agreed to these procedural proposals, and on 28 August a political agreement among the majority of participating parties was signed in Arusha — once more, in the witnessing presence of an impressive array of leaders. A number of parties that did not sign on that date subsequently did so, and the Security Council

needs to congratulate and commend the political leadership of Burundi for this courageous step towards peace in their country.

I wish to publicly record my personal pride, and that of the facilitation team, in the quality of leadership displayed. Few people are aware that the leaders of Burundi that are negotiating in Arusha are highly qualified academically. There are 19 political parties. Six of their negotiators are university graduates in engineering, having qualified overseas, in Brussels, Paris, Germany and Russia. Four of them are university graduates in law, and they too qualified abroad. There are two medical doctors, who also qualified abroad. In addition there are university graduates in mathematics, in economics, in French literature, in biology, in sociology. I have used this in order to move the process forward, and that is why I am supremely confident that whatever problems still lie ahead, we are going to have solid peace and stability in that country.

There obviously remains a range of matters relating to details and implementation that the parties would like to pursue, and that we ourselves require them to resolve among themselves. This is now, however, being done within the framework of a firm political agreement to which the parties are committed. The significance of the agreement is that the political parties now represent a united forum, joined by the compromise agreement reached, and they can deal with the remaining issues and with the combatant forces that are not yet part of the process.

Of these 19 political parties, there are two major political rallies in the country: Unity and National Progress (UPRONA) — the oldest political party and the one to which President Buyoya belongs — and the Front for Democracy in Burundi (FRODEBU), which is the largest political rally in Burundi, led by Mr. Minani. And one of the most encouraging developments is the agreement between President Buyoya and Mr. Minani to work together to resolve problems among themselves, and the two of them have done remarkable work.

Numerous areas of agreement can be cited as examples of how the Burundi leadership practised the art of compromise. We would like to refer only to one: the very crucial and sensitive issue of the integration of a Burundi national defence force. Both Hutu and Tutsi leaders had to depart significantly from their starting positions to arrive at the final agreement that 50 per cent of the defence force would be from the Hutu community and 50 per cent from the Tutsi community, with accommodation being made for the Twa community as well.

It was further agreed that a body of respected persons, independent from the Defence Force, would oversee this process. This, we believe, reflects one of the underlying and fundamental features of the agreement, namely that the democratic rights of the majority are respected, while the fears and concerns of the minorities are simultaneously addressed.

The political agreement reached is obviously not yet the comprehensive and final peace agreement, as some of the main combatant rebel forces are not parties to the signed agreement. The process now continues with a major focus on engaging those forces in direct talks with the political leadership. When we last reported to the Council, we undertook to make the process as inclusive as possible and particularly to open talks with the combatant forces not included at that time.

My concern, when I became Facilitator, was that if the armed groups on the ground were not included, there was no guarantee that if the 19 political parties agreed on the issues, the rebel groups on the ground would respect them. I therefore urged that we should invite the rebel groups to join these negotiations, so that they could be part and parcel of the important agreement that would be reached in Arusha.

That has been done, and we have had numerous fruitful discussions with the leadership of the rebel forces, both in South Africa and in Arusha. From their sides too we have received commitments to finding lasting peace. I say, "that has been done", but I am referring to inviting them to join the Arusha process. We fully accept the sincerity of these pronouncements on the part of leadership of the combatants.

At the same time, we must repeat, here in the Council, what we have on a number of occasions stated to them in our private discussions as well as in public calls: there cannot be any justification for continuing violent attacks on the civilian population when a political agreement has been reached and the way opened for them to bring their concerns to the negotiating table. We call upon them once again to demonstrate the quality of their leadership by announcing a ceasefire and halting the slaughter of

innocent women, men and children, including the disabled.

I must repeat that I regard the leadership of the armed groups as composed of innocent men — men of integrity. But serious political commentators have said that these are not genuine leaders; they are agents of external forces that wish to exterminate the Tutsi community, wherever they are, in Burundi, in Rwanda and other areas. They have said also that no genuine leadership of Burundi, of the Hutu, could continue slaughtering innocent people when in fact the political parties have reached a breakthrough. I have said to both Jean Bosco Ndayekengurukye and Kabura Cossan, the two leaders of the rebel groups, that although I as an individual do not believe this accusation from serious political leaders, nevertheless, by their action of not joining the other leaders in Arusha, they are giving ammunition to their own detractors and undermining my confidence in their integrity, and I have urged them to stop slaughtering innocent people.

One of the questions that they have not answered, but that I have put to them frequently, is, "What military installations have you attacked? How many soldiers have you attacked?" They are unable to answer. But recently — and I do not claim that is because of the pressure I have been putting on them — they have been able to ambush a few military leaders, which one can count on the fingers of one hand, and at one time they were able to attack a number of cadets. But it is quite clear that they are unable to tackle the military installations and the army itself, and that their activities have led to the deaths of innocent civilians. But I have confidence that we will be able, in due course, to convince them.

Some reports to my leader here, the Secretary-General, have indicated that the last summit that we had, in Nairobi, on 20 September, did not produce any good results. That is inaccurate, because although Jean Bosco did not attend, Kabura Cossan of the National Forces of Liberation (FNL) attended, and the heads of State hammered him to give an explanation as to why they are intensifying the arms struggle, killing innocent people, when already there has been a breakthrough and we have signed an agreement. He then said, finally, "I am going back to my organization, and I am going to brief them on what you have said to me. I am confident that I will come back to you with a positive report". Now that is an achievement, and I have confidence in his honour and integrity. I do not think that he was taking the leadership that was present there for a ride.

I want to add that Burundi stands at the threshold of a completely new chapter in its history. That history will judge very harshly those who deliberately choose to obstruct the road to peace and progress. I am confident that the leadership of the combatant forces will not be among those, and I ask the Council to encourage and urge them to help bring about a speedy conclusion to this final part of the Burundi peace process.

Another important new phase awaiting us is that of directing our activities towards Burundi society itself. We have during the course of the present phase of negotiations already visited Burundi, where we met with the Army leadership, the legislature and the judiciary, spiritual leaders and various sectors of civil society. We had the opportunity to visit other areas of the country besides the capital, and also to inspect some of the regroupment camps then still in existence.

The armed groups are saying that the regroupment camps have not been dismantled, that although President Buyoya told me that he would dismantle them all by 31 July he had not done so. I checked with the envoys, the representative of the Secretary-General here, as well as the representative of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), and they assured me that all the camps had been dismantled. But there is a problem, not with Buyoya and the Burundi Government, but with the inmates themselves, as some of them refuse to leave the regroupment camps because of the security situation inside the country. They are afraid that if they go out they will be slaughtered, and they prefer to remain in these regroupment camps. I have no reason to believe that that is not true. When I return to Burundi, I will go back to the regroupment camps, and I am confident that all the envoys have told me the truth.

We now intend to intensify our attention to the internal situation. The agreement reached in Arusha needs to be explained to the people of Burundi and we need to ensure their understanding and concern. A situation needs to be speedily reached in which the leaders of the signatory parties can all return to Burundi to play their parts in this process. I am moving my entire office from Arusha to the capital of Burundi, Bujumbura. For one thing, every time I visit Burundi, the people there, a wide range of different sections of

society, ask me the question: "Those so-called leaders who are negotiating in Arusha — in another country — who gave them the authority to do so? We did not give them the authority."

I have explained to the people in Burundi that our decisions in Arusha will bind us, the 19 political parties and the facilitation team. As far as the people of Burundi are concerned, those decisions will be recommendations. They will be entitled to accept those recommendations as they are or with amendments, or they can reject them totally. But I have the confidence that those decisions are sound, and that good men and women in Burundi will endorse them.

We realize that the security situation in Burundi may not make possible the immediate return of the exiled leaders. I have discussed with the Secretary-General the question of assistance in providing appropriate security for the returning leadership.

We believe that the political leaders of Burundi have made remarkable progress towards peace in these last nine months since we have had the privilege of working with them. We are confident of being closer to the conclusion of this process. The people of Burundi deserve to enjoy the developmental fruits of what will be a remarkable national achievement. For that reason, we have solemnly undertaken to the leaders and people of Burundi that we shall mobilize the international community to assist massively in the reconstruction and development of the Burundi economy and society. We hope with the support of the international community to make of Burundi a showcase of a country where the commitment to peace carries a dividend.

An underlying cause of the conflict in Burundi is to be found in the fierce competition for limited resources, where access is mainly through the State. We hope that the development of a greater private sector component will go a long way to addressing that underlying problem. We have already also started mobilizing countries from the developed world to provide study opportunities to young people from Burundi. The Burundi peace process is not an end in itself; we see it as one part of bringing a better life to the people of that country on a sustainable basis.

We must conclude with expressions of sincere gratitude to all those who have played such crucial roles in the peace process. The Secretary-General of the United Nations has been a constant source of support and encouragement, as has his counterpart in the Organization of African Unity.

The support of so many leaders from the African continent and from further afield has already been mentioned. Without the generosity of the international donor community, none of this would have been possible. The facilitation team did all the hard work, and public acknowledgement of them is due. And, as I have already indicated, ultimately it was up to the leaders of Burundi themselves to make peace.

We look forward to returning here in the not too distant future to report to the Council on the conclusion of the negotiating process and real progress with the implementation of the agreement.

We trust, too, that the international world will with similar enthusiasm participate in the proposed project for the reconstruction and development of Burundi society and Burundi's economy. That will be the ultimate victory for peace.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Nelson Mandela for his comprehensive briefing and for his kind words addressed to me.

In their prior consultations, the members of the Council agreed on the text of a presidential statement supportive of the Facilitator's efforts.

The text of that statement is being made available, and will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2000/29.

The Security Council has thus concluded its business for this meeting. Bearing in mind the decision taken in the Council's prior consultations, I shall adjourn the meeting now. The Council will continue its consideration of the item in a private meeting with former President Mandela immediately following the adjournment of this meeting.

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.